

CHATTANOOGA NEWS

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Maury county is celebrating the abolition of its last turnpike.

Senator Kenyon is given credit for the discovery that God is not a pro-German.

The Russ-German parley applies the acid test to the liberal peace pretensions of the Kaiser.

Announcements of the passing of the blizzard should be taken along with several grains of salt.

We shall expect soon to hear that Senator Ollie James has been for prohibition all the time.

American troops fear no cornea—as with the boches, but pneumonia is proving a more fatal enemy.

Peru is in the midst of a legislative strike. We would express it in this country as a filibuster or begira.

The Nashville Banner declares its preference for Senator Shields, but disclaims knowledge of any million dollar fund.

Since the republicans have declined to bring their old convention to Chattanooga for exhibition purposes, we don't care what becomes of it.

Bulgaria manifests an inclination to come into camp. Shall German Junkerdom be permitted to defeat the making of the decision unanimous?

England will make the use of potatoes as an ingredient of bread compulsory. Which seems to suggest that England has the potatoes to use.

The New Republic asks the not altogether new question of "what is poetry?" It is much easier, however, to determine what is not poetry.

Polk county has provided for the establishment of a Carnegie library at Benton, probably the first county institution of the kind in Tennessee.

The Memphis Commercial Appeal defines bolsheviki as "men who want more." Couldn't America supply a vast army of recruits for the cause?

It is only natural that an unsophisticated onlooker in Vienna should feel an interest in the probable effect of a dry Kentucky on the crop of colonels.

Ten Mexican army officers executed.—Headline. Notwithstanding such inroads, the supply of Mexican generals seems equal to ordinary requirements.

Senator Bailey objects to women joining in the making of laws which they cannot obey. But so far as we have been able to observe, no tears are being shed over the parting.

An exchange declares that Trotsky took his present name from a jailer in Siberia from whom he made his escape. We might have inferred that he took it from the manner of escape.

Ex-Mayor Mitchell has been commissioned a major in the aviation service. Which reminds us that he was frequently accused by political opponents of association with high fliers.

The crown prince is numbered among those who refuse peace without annexations. But the annexation of what he has conquered would not expand the German empire appreciably.

It has been suggested that the food crop situation may compel a restriction of the watermelon acreage. In that case, it becomes a question as to whether whipping the Kaiser is worth the sacrifice which it involves.

It is again hinted that a settlement of the Irish question impends. It will be a marvel, however, little short of the miraculous if the frail bark shall pass between the Scylla of Ulster and the Charybdis of Sinn Fein to a safe anchorage in the harbor of autonomy.

In the course of the debate over the enactment of Tennessee's state-wide prohibition law, a Shelby county representative vehemently declared that Memphis "could not stand it." The New York World now feels very much the same way. It will feel better after a while, however.

It has been said that Japan's reason for not supplying an army for the war in Europe was based upon the fact that the great distance away makes the cost prohibitive. The reverse of this situation was probably the island kingdom's greatest asset in winning a quick-time victory over Russia, once upon a time.

ALSACE-LORRAINE.

No other territorial question will prove as difficult of settlement as that of Alsace-Lorraine. Although Mr. Wilson's "fourteen commandments" contained many which reduce German opposition to peace, what he said about the former French colonies and Poland is being used by the pan-German annexationist party to nerve their countrymen to further resistance. The Junker organs place the most aggressive construction possible on the president's words. That they should at the same time be welcomed in France, as a promise to restore the two provinces to the territories of France, further bolsters this contention. Herbert Bayard Swope, who was in Germany for several years of the war and has written a valuable work on our enemy, writes from Washington that the view of thinkers there is that the president's message, because of those features, will prolong rather than shorten the war.

Many other writers, here, in England, and even in Germany, including the editor of Vorwarts, the social democratic newspaper, see an approach to an adjustment, however.

As Alsace-Lorraine is so important, let us review briefly its history. It was first peopled by Celtic tribes, and, beginning in the fifth century, the Alimanni overran the lands south of the Rhine. The French gave this name to all Germans. Later the Franks came in. Following the Thirty Years' war the provinces were occupied first by Austrian and then by the French armies of Louis XIV.

From 1686 the provinces became a part of France. In the 185 years that followed the people became firmly attached to France, politically and socially. Despite the fact that 85 per cent. of the population, according to the Britannica, speak German in fact indicating how unsafe it is to judge of public sentiment by language alone, they resisted Von Moltke's armies desperately, and most of the battles of the Franco-Prussian war were fought on this soil. The invaders at once announced their intention of reuniting the provinces with Germany and laid heavy money tributes on some of the cities and towns. Such events did much to arouse the people.

Even when the French assembly at Bordeaux voted to accept the German terms the delegates from these provinces united in a historic protest. Two years later when the Bismarck government required every inhabitant to accept citizenship or be expatriated, 45,000 gathered and sadly departed to beloved France. Metz is a typically French city. In Strasbourg, although German is the language spoken, French customs prevail.

For some time the Kaiser alone could initiate legislation in the provincial assembly. This has been corrected. Even yet, however, the two provinces are "crownlands" and are not, strictly speaking, a part of the German federation. They are represented in the reichstag, however, and have a voice in the budget.

Bismarck was wise enough to see that the annexation of these provinces might cause another war with France. He had difficulty getting his own consent to it. He hoped that the people of the two provinces could be won to Germany, but this did not prove easy. Finally, Prussian resentment at continued resistance caused many acts of rigorous punishment, and this further widened the breach. In a business way, the country has prospered under German control. There has been a tremendous development of the mineral resources. Over 300,000 Germans have come in and made investments. There is an apparent willingness in some quarters in Germany to leave the future of the provinces to a plebiscite. The French answer that so many of the former residents have left their homes that such would not be fair. The people of the provinces have been very restive under their situation, but much of their agitation has been for full fellowship in the German federation, rather than to be transferred back to France. They do not wish to be fought over again. Either autonomy or outright independence would possibly suit them. The area of Alsace-Lorraine is 5,607 square miles, and the population in 1910 was 1,874,014.

The language used by the president is significant. It is the same as that of Lloyd George and commits this country to a continuance in the struggle until the "wrong done" France is "righted." Lloyd George said we would stand by "the French democracy" for this purpose. Remember that he was talking to the British labor party and was referring to the similar party in France. That element in France is not insisting necessarily on detaching the two provinces from Germany and adding them to France. They contend for a plebiscite, or the righting of the wrongs of the people of these provinces through greater liberty.

If Mr. Wilson's other terms—disarmament, freedom of the seas, no secret treaties and unrestricted economic relations—are accepted, along with free governments, in the sense we understand the term everywhere, it would not make so much difference under which flag Alsace-Lorraine

lives. The best way to right the wrong is to give them back to France, but we doubt if even France itself would fight the war for years more for such a purpose, if all the benefits may be carried to its former citizens in other ways. The British labor party suggestion of a joint control of regions of Asia may be worth considering as to these provinces.

President Wilson has put forth propositions on which the combatants may agree in many other very important respects. On him will likely devolve the solution of this issue of Alsace-Lorraine. In his address to congress on Dec. 4 he endorsed the Russian formula, "No annexations, no contributions, no punitive indemnities." This would seem to require a restoration of the status before the war.

An extremely important meeting of British labor was held yesterday and the workmen of the United Kingdom placed themselves on the side of those of Russia in endorsement of the above principles, with the addition of "self-determination" of nations. Of course, this is but another phrase for "consent of the governed," which our president and Lloyd George have used. British labor stands for this principle not only in central Europe, but in Asia and Africa, and this perhaps constitutes the longest step forward of the Anglo-Saxon peoples toward governments in all the British colonies on the same principles as in Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand.

The laborites offer a new and novel suggestion. It is in effect that regions in Palestine, Arabia and Armenia be held under a sort of joint international control. In concluding the English working people say:

"Peoples of central Europe: This catastrophe of the human race, this fatal schism in the civilized world can only be ended in the defeat of militarism on both sides and by the victory on both sides of moral and intellectual fair dealing."

No mention of Ireland was made by the labor party. But this will come. The Sinn Feiners are demanding outright independence. This would be as unfortunate for Ireland, probably, as it would be dangerous for England. When the principle of self-government, such as Jefferson taught, is more fully accepted by nations and individual liberty is thoroughly preserved and economic freedom established, there will be less concern over what central government has a nominal control. The idea of democracy in the English-speaking race heretofore has not included the colored peoples. It is only just beginning, except in this country, to include the workmen, and as for the women, they have had little if any voice. But the world is studying democracy and self-determination. There are problems which the white race has to solve. We in the south know these and are less impatient.

GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE. They are already giving some attention to the selection of candidates for the legislature in Alabama, a state where, according to its newspapers, a financial condition very similar to that in Tennessee prevails. The Birmingham Ledger, one of the state's sane and clear-headed newspapers, has frequently urged the necessity of care in electing members of the legislature. Every few days it has something sensible and timely to say on the subject. Following is an extract from a recent editorial:

"Even taxes are not the only necessity for pledging legislators. There are several other things. Each candidate should be pledged not to support any bill that will take more money from the treasury than will probably be there, and to make all appropriations dependent on the state of the treasury. Our state's financial affairs are in a shameful condition, which is without excuse. Her own sons have deliberately mismanaged her money, and no state at any time has been so shamefully outraged by its own sons. We should not permit it again. If it be done, it should not only be another violation of the oath of office, but also of publicly made pledges to the men who elected them."

"No matter what pledges candidates may make in secret, they should be made to make pledges in public as to their votes on the finances of the state. They are sent to Montgomery in a fiduciary capacity by the voters, paid from the public treasury, and are servants of the state and the agents of the counties. All of them should be asked publicly their intentions on taxation and appropriations."

"There are yet other matters of importance like reducing the number of officials and arranging duties so that the state may get the use of more of its income. But the finances have become the cancer, and now is the time to remedy that in the nomination of members of the legislature."

Very little, if any, better showing could be made out in behalf of the legislature of Tennessee. Appropriations for this or that and salary additions have been made with apparently little consideration of whether the treasury would have the money forthcoming to pay them. It is only necessary to mention such a proceeding to demonstrate its patent absurdity. The state is essentially a business institution, and no business concern can preserve solvency under such management.

Our opinion coincides with that of the Ledger. The voters of Tennessee have an important task to perform this year in the election of members of the legislature. It is a matter which concerns them vitally, and the election of a competent business man for governor is almost equal in importance to the election of the whole legislature. Tennesseeans will be very remiss in their duties if they do not give careful attention this year to both features.

THE NITRATE CRISIS.

As in the case of water power development, the necessity for the domestic production of an adequate supply of ammonia and nitrates has assumed the proportions of a crisis. The current number of Metallurgical and Chemical Engineering declares that it is now apparent that our requirements of ammonia and nitrates to be used in the manufacture of explosives for our army and navy have been greatly underestimated, and that the gravity of the situation which has been slowly but surely approaching has not been realized by the majority of the government's advisers."

Notwithstanding the facts that our imports of Chilean nitrates and our production of coke ammonia have both been greatly increased, the demand for these products, consequent upon our entry into the war, has also increased much more rapidly, so that now the government finds itself facing a serious shortage of ammonia nitrate. The ordnance department has accordingly arranged with the Air Nitrate corporation as its agent in the construction and operation of the great Muscle Shoals plant, the site for which was recently determined upon. The officers of the new company or corporation are at the head of a private organization, the American Cyanamid company, but have practically offered their services and that of their organization to the government in the installation and inauguration of its new plant. Work is already under way according to the engineering journal quoted above, and shipments of nitrates are expected to begin in six months. This, of course, does not mean that the great power plant necessary will be in operation in that time, but provisional arrangements are being made to supply power in the meantime. Neither does it interfere with the erection of the smaller plant at Sheffield, which is sometimes termed the experimental plant.

These developments are in furtherance of the 1916 act of congress appropriating \$20,000,000 for the production of a nitrate supply. A nitrate supply committee was appointed by the secretary of war to study various sources and processes of production of nitrates and nitrate acid. This committee proceeded leisurely and with some elaboration, as is usually the case, and the need developed more rapidly than preparations for the supply. As suggested by this engineering journal, one would not infer from a reading of the nitrate supply committee's report that there was any occasion for haste or urgency. In this connection, the suggestions of President Washington, of the American Cyanamid company, in 1915, outlining a plan for the production of a supply of nitrates, are sketched and the articles of the Metallurgical and Chemical Engineering concludes as follows:

"These developments bring out two facts. First, that our needs have been greatly underestimated by the majority, and second, that in time of war quick action is needed and no time can be lost in experimentation or indulging in fascinating possibilities. The government's decision does not discredit in the least the General Chemical company's process nor the excellent work done by the nitrate supply committee. It appears, however, that they greatly underestimated our needs and the necessity for quick action, and failed to recommend the use of the kind in the hand, the cyanamid process, which had been thoroughly proved on an immense scale and was already well understood by American engineers. The reader is referred to Nauckhoff's article in our issue of Nov. 1, 1917, which shows the nitrate resources of the war, the cyanamid process, which had been thoroughly proved on an immense scale and was already well understood by American engineers. 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